Smoking

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Smoking

by JolieFolie

Summary

Hannibal sees the bespectacled brunet in the hall and says, "That guy's hot," to his friends. Will wants the mysterious, dangerous new guy in school, but he's no stranger to one-sided crushes. Or could this impossibly cool, out-of-his-league guy actually like him back?
(The first and second chapters are different versions of the same story because... Have you ever bought two pairs of shoes at the same time because you liked them both? Exactly!)

Old version

Chapter Notes

> I originally wrote this one-shot in June, feeling like there was something amiss about it but not knowing how to fix it. Lately I've been reading a bit about kishotenketsu and the concept of not necessarily having conflict in a story. I edited the story most notably cutting out the scene with Freddie, the mentions of H/W's cocks, among other things. I did change the climax which completely changes the story, but I didn't want to exactly replace the original version with the new one in case anyone preferred the original better.

Will was late for tutoring. He could already hear Mr. Crawford scolding him in his head. The hall would've been clear for him to run, if it hadn't been for the gang of boys crowded near the lockers. He readjusted his glasses. *Leave me alone, don't talk to me--*

"That guy's hot."

He caught sight of Hannibal from the corner of his eye. He was standing against the lockers with four other guys but there was no mistaking it was him who said it—no one else at school had that accent.

He glanced around—there was no one else walking—and then glanced at Hannibal. He knew who Hannibal was, but he was probably a nobody in Hannibal's eyes. Will was a bit of a loner, avoiding the cafeteria at lunch in favour of the tutoring room. Tutoring was a way of earning much needed money and avoiding looking like a misanthropist, at least on paper. Plus Mr. Crawford, his pre-cal teacher, kind of pressured him into doing it. He had the top mark in pre-cal and he was surprisingly good at teaching it. He didn't mind interacting with people when there was a point. And a paycheque.

So that's Will for you.

Now imagine this super mysterious, sort of gorgeous transfer student from Japan who isn't actually Japanese shows up two weeks into September, disrupting the status quo of this otherwise middle-class, boring-ass school. Total wild card, everyone thinks, and he gives just few enough fucks to be instantly considered cool. But everyone joins a clique sooner or later, whether you choose it or they choose you. Hannibal was politely aloof for a week and then fell in with the stoners.

The stoners. Really.

Anyway, Hannibal had this dangerous vibe that the girls went crazy for—only it was almost Halloween now and no one had seen him do anything more than make superficial small talk

with the girls who were bold enough to hit on him. Will tried not to get his hopes up. He had had his heart broken enough times, even at the tender age of 16, to know that a boy who ignored most girls was still capable of ignoring him.

Hannibal was staring at him. But in all fairness, Will was staring back, and Hannibal could have been talking about someone else. He kept walking, textbooks held stiffly against his side with one arm. He retreated into the boys' washroom.

He tried peeing but he was too excited to relax. He gave up and went to the mirror. Glasses covering his eyes, curls dangling over the glasses—*Gee, Graham, it's almost like you don't want people to look at you.*

The collar of his hunter green flannel shirt was buttoned to the neck. He undid the top button.

Hot.

His cheeks went pink and he couldn't look at himself anymore. He checked his watch. 12:09. Crawford was gonna kill him.

On Thursdays Will had a spare after lunch.

Miss Bloom, the librarian, didn't like it when he built forts on the table out of atlases to hide behind. He always put the atlases back properly but she said it upset her for different reasons. *Everything all right at home?* He recalled her asking once, her blue eyes compassionate.

It's not my home that's the issue, he'd replied. *I have privacy there.*

It only took Will two minutes to speed walk from the tutoring room to the library, but that route involved passing the lockers he saw Hannibal at yesterday. He could take the longer way—seven minutes—which would mean passing by more people and a greater chance of seeing someone he didn't want to see. The longer he debated with himself out here in the hall, the higher chance there was of someone passing him. Miss Bloom would worry about him if he was late—not that she should, but she knew his routine and she probably cared a little too much about the students who had Possible Future Serial Killer written all over them. Ordinarily he wouldn't care about reassuring someone who had no claim over him, but he hated admitting that he kinda liked how maternal Miss Bloom was. His mother had died when he was only six, leaving a hole that he didn't like to talk about. Other boys liked Miss Bloom because she was a LILF, allegedly—another locker room conversation topic that alienated him.

So that's Miss Bloom for you.

Will took the short route. He kept his head down and only registered a single tall figure by The Lockers above the rim of his glasses. *Leave me alone, don't—*

"Will Graham."

He had to squeeze his books so he wouldn't drop them. He stopped and looked at Hannibal's boots—not winter boots, but legit knee-high brown leather boots with a one-inch heel and bronze buttons dancing up the side *holy shit*

and that's about as far as he got.

A hand offered itself. "My name is Hannibal Lecter."

He readjusted his books to shake it.

Hannibal had slim hands and a confident handshake. "This is a big school. I had to do some hunting to find out who you were."

Will managed to raise his gaze up to Hannibal's neckline in response.

"Looks like you have a spare, hmm?"

Will nodded. "You?"

Hannibal smiled with one side of his face and shrugged. "*Peu importe.* Come with me."

The brief resentment at him showing off with the French was replaced by a bad, premonitory feeling in his gut. "Where are your friends?" He'd managed to stay pretty much invisible since grade 9, but he still had nightmares about being ganged up on, carried outside and thrown into a BFI bin, the lid slamming shut and denting down as the other boys sat on it, trapping him—

He touched his glasses.

"You don't trust me," Hannibal observed.

"Should I?" Will glared at him from behind the rim of his glasses, or at least tried to, until he saw his irises were amber with maroon limbal rings.

Hannibal contemplated him, amused. "No. I'm afraid your instincts are correct. Which means you're the first person in this school who genuinely intrigues me."

His heart jumped into his throat. "I'm flattered," he mumbled with a measure of sarcasm. He had zero clue how to flirt and usually ended up sounding like an asshole.

"As you should be." Hannibal checked the time on his iPhone. "Aren't you buried in the library by this time? Or is it possible you find me just as intriguing?"

Will's ears had a tendency of going red at times like this. His hair hid his ears but his cheeks were still pinker than a newborn baby's—

Hannibal offered to carry his books. Will was pretty much done then.

I don't know if your school had or has a Toke Tube, but this school did. If you're not familiar with the concept, let me explain: it's a dark space at the bottom of a secluded spiral staircase to nowhere that you can get to only by going through a door that doesn't open from the inside. You have to prop it open if you want to chill at the bottom, otherwise you're stuck inside forever, sort of. The door has a window in it, so you could pop your face in and bang on the window until someone noticed. And the Toke Tube has pretty decent cell phone reception. Will couldn't afford a cell, though.

The school didn't have the funding or enough fucks to give to close off the area or, like, fill the whole thing with cement. Will could have been the biggest pothead in school and he still wouldn't have set foot in there. High likelihood of getting trapped.

The worst part about being trapped wasn't the helplessness. It was the audience. Nothing convinced Will more that humans didn't give a shit about each other than when he heard other kids laughing from the other side of the BFI bin, the locker, the closet.

He wasn't totally convinced Hannibal and his gang weren't playing a prank on him. But there was a part of him that hoped Hannibal had a crush on him. He felt warm and had to undo the top button of his shirt, discreetly while Hannibal's back was turned to open the door.

"I apologize for not bringing candles. I hope this will do." Hannibal held up his iPhone and activated the flashlight. He looked at Will for a moment, glancing at his newly exposed collarbone. His eyes flickered with approval and Will tried not to blush. Useless.

"Ordinarily I'd hold the door, but since you don't trust me, I'll go first. Mind grabbing that chair?"

Will grabbed the plastic chair at a nearby table and wedged it between the door and the wall, following Hannibal into the square room just big enough for the staircase. The staircase went down pretty far and the light from upstairs didn't really make it down to the bottom. With Hannibal's phone there was enough light to see all the graffiti on the walls.

Will analyzed the graffiti out of nervousness and an attempt at conversation. "Lots of hearts with initials inside. Some bizarre monsters with teeth and too many heads. All wanting to be noticed, these lovers and tormented souls."

"And a surprising dearth of dicks." Hannibal sat on the floor, setting the phone on the floor so the light shined upward and around, and patted the concrete next to him. From his pants pocket came a little baggie of paper and grass.

Will's ass barely touched the floor before he erupted. "You're in my pre-cal and English classes, the teachers yell at you, you aren't there half the time and when you are you're late. I know you're smart—Jesus, you've got the eyes of a shark and you move like a fox—but you don't apply yourself and I can't figure out why. You have the latest iPhone and boots that cost more than my dad's car but you're going to a public school in the middle-class suburb. You could get top grades, charm any admissions board and afford the best universities. You could gain enough power over your life to be able to do whatever you wanted. And you could do some good in the world."

Hannibal had rolled an impressive joint during Will's monologue. "Like what?"

"Help people, I don't know. Be a doctor."

"I don't like getting my hands dirty."

"Then be a psychiatrist."

Hannibal pulled out a Bic and brought a fire to life with his thumb. "I've always had a keen interest in what people are thinking. What were you thinking, Will, coming here to smoke pot with me?"

"I didn't know we were gonna smoke pot."

Hannibal sat so his head was against the wall, legs bent and spread, forearms on his knees. He took the first drag. "You knew I kept company with the stoners. You knew what the Toke Tube is. You followed me down here. Did you think it was just to draw your initials inside a heart on the wall for everyone to see?" He held out the joint and Will took it, careful not to touch Hannibal's fingers because he might die if that happened.

He stared at the burning end before bringing the joint to his lips. His mouth would be on the exact place that Hannibal's lips had been seconds before. This was the closest he would ever get to having his saliva against his lips.

He'd never smoked pot before. He hoped it would mellow him out and he wouldn't turn paranoid. "I just think you're interesting," Will said. He inhaled.

"Well?"

Will expected to cough. There wasn't any smoke when he exhaled. "I think I swallowed it." He tried again, Hannibal coaching him. Will inhaled a third time.

Hannibal gently took the joint from him, his hand grazing Will's. "Easy," he said in a calm, almost paternal voice. His lips returned to the spot both their lips had touched.

Will listened to him exhale, not feeling any calmer. Fuck, he was going to be paranoid.

"You want to know why I fell in with the stoners, but you already know the answer."

Will shook his head. The wall was hard and it hurt his back to lean against, so Will sat with his legs crossed, leaning forward.

"Tell me, Will, which academic award have you never achieved?"

Hannibal must have been looking at the awards displayed in the hall. "Most improved," Will said.

"Precisely." Hannibal handed him the joint. Will shivered, not sure if it was from the fleeting contact with his hand or the fact that Hannibal was someone who used the word precisely. "Think of a new student who hits the ground running, academically speaking. Immediately

intimidating and alienating to his peers, leaving nowhere to go but down in terms of expectations his teachers have. Much smarter to set the bar low and enjoy the climb."

Hannibal watched him inhale properly this time. "Will, you can't tell me you haven't felt resentful, even once, of your dim peers who receive high praise when they earn B's while you practically kill yourself maintaining an A+ average, receiving zero recognition because you are merely fulfilling everyone's expectations which you yourself created. You have nowhere to go but down."

Will coughed and held out the joint. "I guess this is it for me, then."

"You're such a good boy. Quiet. Unnoticed. You tell yourself you prefer it that way."

"You noticed me." He took off his glasses, set them on floor, rubbed his eyes.

"I'd like you to tutor me to help give my unprecedented leap in academic achievement some credibility. This would be only a pretense, of course. You could do with some tutoring yourself. You completely missed the sexual undertones in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, although I think that was on purpose. You provided a reasonable, rather insightful alternative interpretation. Are you always so modest, or were you protesting the curriculum choice of such a provocative text?"

Will's cock twitched unexpectedly and he blushed. "How—?"

"I read your essay while going through Mrs. Hobbs's desk during lunch. Top left drawer. Yours was on top. 97%. No further comments—she even ignores you on paper." Hannibal held out the joint. Will was too humiliated and outraged to take it.

"In your defence," Hannibal continued. "I enjoyed reading your essay. You made bold claims and your style was rather verbose. Funny how the way someone comes across on paper can be completely different from how they present in person."

Will eyed him. Was he hallucinating, or had Hannibal inched closer while he was rubbing his eyes? Will licked his dry lips and considered putting his glasses back on. "And you were searching Mrs. Hobbs's desk because…?"

"I saw her put your essay in there. How else was I supposed to get to know you? Well, you and Mrs. Hobbs." Hannibal looked away and his lip curled, as if he found toenail clippers and congealed nail polish in the bottom drawer of her desk. "You gave your assessment of *Dracula*, I'm giving my assessment of you."

Will raised his eyebrows sharply, half challenging, half curious.

Hannibal's gaze roamed his face, his torso, his lips. "You are unlike anyone I have ever met."

Will's eyes widened. He was acutely aware of how alone he was with Hannibal. And how, in all his life, he'd never felt less alone.

"Tell me, do all latent genius pothead rebels turn you on, or am I the exception?"

Will lifted a hand to reach for his glasses. It was too hot in the tiny room. He needed to escape.

But he grabbed the joint from Hannibal's hand and tossed it on the concrete floor. "Only the ones from Japan." Will reached for his face at the same time Hannibal grabbed his waist.

Their lips fit together perfectly.

It lasted forever and not nearly long enough.

Will wondered how the hell he'd ever focus if he did end up tutoring him.

Hannibal pulled Will so he was sitting on his lap. Will barely had time to check out how hard Hannibal had become before his mouth was on his again. "I've wanted to know what you taste like, Will, since the first time I laid eyes on you."

"I think you're tasting your own weed mostly." Will's cock strained against his jeans and he pressed himself against Hannibal's hard abdomen for some relief.

Hannibal's hands trailed downward over the front of his belt. He tugged Will's shirt until he could run his fingers over the dark peach fuzz on his abdomen. Will inhaled sharply. "What else can I taste?" Hannibal's voice was husky from the smoke.

Will groaned and fisted his hand as best he could in Hannibal's short hair. He tried tugging, wanted to hurt him. Hannibal's eyes smouldered. He either liked the pain or Will wasn't pulling hard enough.

The door slammed above. Someone moved the chair. They were locked in.

Will leaped up, grabbing his glasses and forgetting about his erection. He clambered up the stairs while Hannibal took his time readjusting his cock. He left the cell phone on the floor and the shadows played with the monsters on the walls. As Hannibal followed him up the stairs, he wondered whether he was checking out his ass. Will didn't have the ego to look back and check.

Through the window, he saw one of the bitchy popular kids, Freddie, standing with a satisfied grin on her face. Will pounded the door, keeping his voice deep to hide how close he was to panicking. "Don't be a dick, Freddie."

"I'd rather be a dick than a pussy," she tossed back. Her face lit up when Hannibal walked up casually behind him. "Hey Hanni, Will is scared. I think I'll let him out."

"Please do," Hannibal said. He didn't have to work at staying calm. There was a sparkle of jealousy amid Will's almost-panic.

"Only if—" She put her hands on her hips, clearly enjoying the power trip. "You kiss."

Will froze. Did she see his private moment with Hannibal? Not likely. She gave the order as if it was the most humiliating thing she could think of. But judging by Will's red face, she probably thought she was right.

Hannibal let out a slightly arrogant laugh, almost a scoff.

“On the lips. Then I’ll open the door.”

“Fredricka, please.” Hannibal sounded unimpressed.

Her eyes went from Hannibal to Will. She must think Hannibal is bluffing, Will thought.

She tapped her foot. “I heard the Toke Tube is airtight when the door’s locked.”

Will squeezed his eyes shut. Freddie wasn’t laughing yet, but he could feel the monsters closing in on him.

Freddie gasped. He opened his eyes to see her staring at Hannibal behind him, the colour drained from her face. Will would have turned around to see what the hell Hannibal was doing if he wasn’t frozen in panic.

“Well. Aren’t you going to get your phone out?” Hannibal stepped forward, turned to Will and grasped his shoulders. “I’m only going to do this once.” Then, to Will, in a low voice: “Trust me, Will. I’ll take care of you. Come here.”

Will barely noticed Freddie pull out her phone and hold it up, aiming its camera at them through the window. Her hand was shaking. He closed his eyes and tried to forget where he was, just focusing on the feel of Hannibal’s hands on him. And then his lips, on his forehead, his cheeks. His lips.

Will crumpled into him, clutching the back of his shoulder with his nerve-sweaty hands. The more Will crumpled, the harder Hannibal seemed to become, pulling him closer until their groins pressed against each other. Hannibal kissed as though he knew there was an audience —there would always be an audience—but he didn’t care. He welcomed the chance to tell everyone to go fuck themselves.

He released him, Will still clutching his shoulder. They stared at each other until they heard the door swing open.

“Fuck me. I didn’t think you’d actually do it,” Freddie said.

“You’d be surprised what I’m capable of,” Hannibal said, holding the door open. Will glanced at his eyes, the maroon bleeding into the amber, and shivered. “Now post it on Facebook.”

Freddie looked nonplussed. “You know people will think you’re an item if they see this.”

Hannibal looked at her as if she had the IQ of a pig. “I wonder what they’ll think of you.”

Freddie’s face went white again. Her thumb danced frenetically on her phone. “Done.” She glared at Will before leaving, avoiding eye contact with Hannibal.

Will wanted to slap him and burrow into his chest. “You’re not usually that reckless.”

“A bold assertion. How do you know what is usual for me?”

“I do my own research. Without invading anyone’s privacy.” Will allowed a smile to reach his eyes before ducking his head.

Hannibal ran downstairs to grab his phone. He held Will’s hand when he returned. “You’re late for class.”

“Shit.” Will glanced at the time on the phone. He bolted out the door—

Hannibal kept his grip on his hand.

“Hannibal, I gotta go. I’ve never been late before.”

He smiled. “Wonderful. How do you feel about Thai?”

Will adjusted his glasses, heart racing, hands sweaty. His mind was already sitting in his desk in Mrs. Hobb’s classroom, hearing her scold him. “Thai what?”

For the first time, Will heard Hannibal laugh.

The next day at lunch, Mr. Crawford saw Will sitting in the tutoring room. Damn, the boy was like clockwork. He spoke to Will’s guest, who was sitting kitty corner to him and seemed enraptured by what Will was saying.

Crawford strolled over to interrupt. “Mr. Lecter, I’m pleased to see you here.” Crawford always called students by their last names in an effort to shove them into adulthood ahead of schedule. “How’s Graham treating you?”

He replied without taking his gaze off of Will. “I’m his newest and most loyal patient.”

Crawford chuckled. “This place does seem like a loony bin sometimes. But we don’t have patients. Maybe one day Mr. Graham will?”

“Hannibal said he wants to be a doctor,” Will replied, trying to keep a straight face. Mr. Crawford would either eat that up or be shocked speechless.

Hannibal smiled at him using just his eyes. Will gripped his pencil and tried not to shudder.

“Good, good,” Crawford said, actually sounding pleased. Maybe delinquents could get their act together after all. “What kind of doctor?”

“Will’s doctor.”

Crawford laughed and it filled the room. “I’ll leave you to it, then, Dr. Lecter. Good work, Graham.” He walked away, clueless as ever.

So that’s Crawford for you.

Will glanced at Hannibal's pre-cal sheet. He'd already filled in half the questions without his help.

Hannibal said, "So, Vietnamese? If you say 'Vietnamese what' I'll carve your heart out with this." He held up his pencil.

"Don't be ridiculous." Will slid the pencil from his grasp, purposely brushing his hand against Hannibal's, hoping he secretly shivered the way Will did when they touched. Will sharpened the pencil and slipped it back in his hand. "There. Oh yeah, Vietnamese wh—?"

Hannibal clamped a hand around his mouth. Will stared at him as he replaced his hand with his mouth and kissed him.

Hannibal released him in time to see him blush and look at Crawford, who happened to have his head buried in a large textbook.

Will ducked his head and his glasses slipped a little on his nose. "All you think about is food," he murmured, hoping to sound flirty but knowing he probably sounded like an asshole. Hannibal would understand.

Hannibal leaned back and picked up his pencil. "Among other things." He put his hand on Will's thigh under the table, smiling when Will's whole body stiffened. Will's gaze was half glaring, half smouldering.

Hannibal smiled cheerily as if nothing was going on under the table.

So that's Hannibal for you.

Yup, Will thought, *tutoring him is going to be a nightmare.*

New version

Chapter Notes

> This is the same chapter as before, only I edited it keeping in mind the philosophy that a story doesn't necessarily need conflict. I like the result better. I'm posting it as a second chapter rather than replacing the original work because the climax is the most significant thing that has changed, thus making it a different story. Or maybe that's just me and I'm nitpicky.
>
> I originally wrote the part with Freddie in the original version for two reasons: I didn't want to write explicit sex and I wanted to introduce conflict.
>
> If anyone prefers the original version, I've left it as the first chapter.
>
> What follows below is a bit of a shorter read.

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The hall would've been clear for him to run, if it hadn't been for the gang of boys crowded near the lockers. He readjusted his glasses.

"That guy's hot."

He caught sight of Hannibal from the corner of his eye. He was standing against the lockers with four other guys but there was no mistaking it was him who said it—no one else at school had that accent.

He glanced around—there was no one else walking—and then glanced at Hannibal. He knew who Hannibal was, but he was probably a nobody in Hannibal's eyes. Will was a bit of a loner, avoiding the cafeteria at lunch in favour of the tutoring room. Tutoring was a way of earning much needed money and avoiding looking like a misanthropist, at least on paper. Plus Mr. Crawford, his pre-cal teacher, kind of pressured him into doing it. He had the top mark in pre-cal and he was surprisingly good at teaching it. He didn't mind interacting with people when there was a point. And a paycheque.

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Miss Bloom would worry about him if he was late—not that she should, but she knew he always spent his Thursday after-lunch spare in the library.

And she probably cared a little too much about the students who had Possible Future Serial Killer written all over them.

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"Looks like you have a spare, hmm?"

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"Should I?" Will glared at him from behind the rim of his glasses—until he realized Hannibal had the most arresting wolf's gaze he'd ever seen.

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"Ordinarily I'd hold the door, but since you don't trust me, I'll go first. Mind grabbing that chair?"

Will grabbed the plastic chair at a nearby table and wedged it between the door and the wall, following Hannibal into the square room just big enough for the staircase. The staircase went down pretty far and the light from upstairs didn't really make it down to the bottom. With Hannibal's phone there was enough light to see all the graffiti on the walls.

Will analyzed the graffiti out of nervousness and an attempt at conversation. "Lots of hearts with initials inside. Some bizarre monsters with teeth and too many heads. All wanting to be noticed, these lovers and tormented souls."

"And a surprising dearth of dicks." Hannibal sat on the floor, setting the phone on the floor so the light shined upward and around, and patted the concrete next to him. From his pants pocket came a little baggie of paper and grass.

Will's butt barely touched the floor before he erupted. "You're in my pre-cal and English classes, the teachers yell at you, you aren't there half the time and when you are you're late. I know you're smart—Jesus, you've got the eyes of a shark and you move like a fox—but you don't apply yourself and I can't figure out why. You have the latest iPhone and boots that cost more than my dad's car but you're going to a public school in the middle-class suburb. You could get top grades, charm any admissions board and afford the best universities. You could gain enough power over your life to be able to do whatever you wanted. And you could do some good in the world."

Hannibal had rolled an impressive joint during Will's monologue. "Like what?"

"Help people, I don't know. Be a doctor."

“I don’t like getting my hands dirty.”

“Then be a psychiatrist.”

Hannibal pulled out a Bic and brought a fire to life with his thumb. “I’ve always had a keen interest in what people are thinking. What were you thinking, Will, coming here to smoke pot with me?”

“I didn’t know we were gonna smoke pot.”

Hannibal sat so his head was against the wall, legs bent and spread, forearms on his knees. He took the first drag. “You knew I kept company with the stoners. You knew what the Toke Tube is. You followed me down here. Did you think it was just to draw your initials inside a heart on the wall for everyone to see?” He held out the joint and Will took it, careful not to touch Hannibal’s fingers because he might die if that happened.

He stared at the burning end before bringing the joint to his lips. His mouth would be on the exact place that Hannibal’s lips had been seconds before. This was the closest he would ever get to having his saliva against his lips.

He’d never smoked pot before. He hoped it would mellow him out and he wouldn’t turn paranoid. “I just think you’re interesting,” Will said. He inhaled.

“Well?”

Will expected to cough. There wasn’t any smoke when he exhaled. “I think I swallowed it.” He tried again, Hannibal coaching him. Will inhaled a third time.

Hannibal gently took the joint from him, his hand grazing Will’s. “Easy,” he said in a calm, almost paternal voice. His lips returned to the spot both their lips had touched.

Will listened to him exhale, not feeling any calmer. Fuck, he was going to be paranoid.

“You want to know why I fell in with the stoners, but you already know the answer.”

Will shook his head. The wall was hard and it hurt his back to lean against, so Will sat with his legs crossed, leaning forward.

“Tell me, Will, which academic award have you never achieved?”

Hannibal must have been looking at the awards displayed in the hall. “Most improved,” Will said.

“Precisely.” Hannibal handed him the joint. Will shivered, not sure if it was from the fleeting contact with his hand or the fact that Hannibal was someone who used the word precisely. “Think of a new student who hits the ground running, academically speaking. Immediately intimidating and alienating to his peers, leaving nowhere to go but down in terms of expectations his teachers have. Much smarter to set the bar low and enjoy the climb.”

Hannibal watched him inhale properly this time. “Will, you can’t tell me you haven’t felt resentful, even once, of your dim peers who receive high praise when they earn B’s while you practically kill yourself maintaining an A+ average, receiving zero recognition because you are merely fulfilling everyone’s expectations which you yourself created. You have nowhere to go but down.”

Will coughed and held out the joint. “I guess this is it for me, then.”

“You’re such a good boy. Quiet. Unnoticed. You tell yourself you prefer it that way.”

“You noticed me.” He took off his glasses, set them on floor, rubbed his eyes.

“I’d like you to tutor me to help give my unprecedented leap in academic achievement some credibility. This would be only a pretense, of course. You could do with some tutoring yourself. You completely missed the sexual undertones in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, although I think that was on purpose. You provided a reasonable, rather insightful alternative interpretation. Are you always so modest, or were you protesting the curriculum choice of such a provocative text?”

Will blushed. “How—?”

“I read your essay while going through Mrs. Hobbs’s desk during lunch. Top left drawer. Yours was on top. 97%. No further comments—she even ignores you on paper.” Hannibal held out the joint. Will was too humiliated and outraged to take it.

“In your defence,” Hannibal continued. “I enjoyed reading your essay. You made bold claims and your style was rather verbose. Funny how the way someone comes across on paper can be completely different from how they present in person.”

Will eyed him. Was he hallucinating, or had Hannibal inched closer while he was rubbing his eyes? Will licked his dry lips and considered putting his glasses back on. “And you were searching Mrs. Hobbs’s desk because…?”

“I saw her put your essay in there. How else was I supposed to get to know you? Well, you and Mrs. Hobbs.” Hannibal looked away and his lip curled, as if he found toenail clippers and congealed nail polish in the bottom drawer of her desk. “You gave your assessment of *Dracula*, I’m giving my assessment of you.”

Will raised his eyebrows sharply, half challenging, half curious.

Hannibal’s gaze roamed his face, his torso, his lips. “You are unlike anyone I have ever met.”

Will’s eyes widened. He was acutely aware of how alone he was with Hannibal. And how, in all his life, he’d never felt less alone.

“Tell me, do all latent genius pothead rebels turn you on, or am I the exception?”

It was too hot in the tiny room. He needed to escape.

But he grabbed the joint from Hannibal's hand and tossed it on the concrete floor. "Only the ones from Japan." Will reached for his face at the same time Hannibal grabbed his waist.

Their lips fit together perfectly.

It lasted forever and not nearly long enough.

Will wondered how the hell he'd ever focus if he did end up tutoring him.

Hannibal pulled Will so he was sitting on his lap. "I've wanted to know what you taste like, Will, since the first time I laid eyes on you."

"I think you're tasting your own weed mostly."

Hannibal's hands trailed downward over the front of his belt. He tugged Will's shirt until he could run his fingers over the dark peach fuzz on his abdomen. Will inhaled sharply.

Hannibal's voice was husky. "What else can I taste?"

Afterwards, Hannibal led him by the hand up the staircase to the door. "You're late for class."

"Shit." Will made for the exit—

Hannibal pulled him back.

"Hannibal, I gotta go. I've never been late before."

"Wonderful. How do you feel about Thai?"

Will adjusted his glasses. His mind was already sitting in his desk in Mrs. Hobb's classroom, hearing her scold him. "Thai what?"

That was the first time he heard Hannibal laugh.

Mr. Crawford saw Will sitting in the tutoring room. Damn, the boy was like clockwork. He spoke to Will's guest, who was sitting kitty corner to him and seemed enraptured by what Will was saying.

Crawford strolled over to interrupt. "Mr. Lecter, I'm pleased to see you here." Crawford always called students by their last names in an effort to shove them into adulthood ahead of schedule. "How's Graham treating you?"

He replied without taking his gaze off of Will. "I'm his newest and most loyal patient."

Crawford chuckled. "We don't have patients. But maybe one day Mr. Graham will?"

"Hannibal said he wants to be a doctor," Will replied, trying to keep a straight face. Mr. Crawford would either eat that up or be shocked speechless.

Hannibal smiled at him using just his eyes. Will gripped his pencil and tried not to shudder.

“Good, good,” Crawford said, actually sounding pleased. Maybe delinquents could get their act together after all. “What kind of doctor?”

“Will’s doctor.”

Crawford laughed and it filled the room. “I’ll leave you to it, then, Dr. Lecter. Good work, Graham.” He walked away, clueless as ever.

So that’s Crawford for you.

Will glanced at Hannibal’s pre-cal sheet. He’d already filled in half the questions without his help.

Hannibal said, “So, Vietnamese? If you say ‘Vietnamese what’ I’ll carve your heart out with this.” He held up his pencil.

“Don’t be ridiculous.” Will slid the pencil from his grasp, purposely brushing his hand against Hannibal’s, hoping he secretly shivered the way Will did when they touched. Will sharpened the pencil and slipped it back in his hand. “There. Oh yeah, Vietnamese wh—?“

Hannibal clamped a hand around his mouth. Will stared at him as he replaced his hand with his mouth and kissed him.

Hannibal released him in time to see him blush and look at Crawford, who happened to have his head buried in a large textbook.

Will ducked his head and his glasses slipped a little on his nose. “All you think about is food,” he murmured, hoping to sound flirty but knowing he probably sounded like an asshole. Hannibal would understand.

Hannibal leaned back and picked up his pencil. “Among other things.” He put his hand on Will’s thigh under the table, smiling when Will’s whole body stiffened. Will’s gaze was half glaring, half smouldering.

Hannibal smiled cheerily as if nothing was going on under the table.

So that’s Hannibal for you.

Yup, Will thought, *tutoring him is going to be a nightmare.*

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